



Our Lady of Indiana

Regional Fraternity - Secular Franciscan Order

"From the Gospel to life; from life to the Gospel"

August 2016

Volume 4, Issue 3

NAFRA Theme for 2016 **Bring God's Love to All**

A Message from our Regional Minister: Kathleen White, OFS



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Our Regional Prayer — a Gift from St. Francis

Holy Virgin Mary, among all women born into the world, there is none like you. Daughter and Handmaid of the Most High, sovereign King, the heavenly Father, Mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ, Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for us with St. Michael the archangel and with all the powers of the heavens and with all the saints together with your most holy beloved Son, Lord and teacher.



A link to the Quinquennial website can be found at:
www.nafra-sfo.org

The best part of attending the Q for me has always been the people – the family. From being greeted by someone you haven't seen in a while who then cups your face in their hands; to looking for someone you haven't seen since the last Q but you hope is here – yes! there she is!; to meeting new and exciting people (a young lady in my Q fraternity had a PhD in limnology); to someone recognizing your name on your name-tag and saying, "I was hoping to meet you... thank you for..." It's really all about the people, the family.

I was able to sit with a dear friar and have a very good talk about Spiritual Assistance. I visited with several authors and brought a book for one's autograph. I thanked an artist for his incredible talent and he was so pleased to see how I had incorporated his work into my everyday life (have you seen the back of my phone lately?) I was

telling someone a story and got teary eyed and they put down their notebook and hugged me. I passed on a message to someone from one of our members, and in the passing on of the message to the proper person, there were tears and hugs and holding each other as we cried. One friar whom I have known for a couple decades shared with me a very personal insight he had, and though we visited for only a short time, there was trust between us. And I was able to acquire a piece of sculpture from an artist that I had known and worked with prior to regionalization over 30 years ago (and there is a funny story to go along with it).

The people – the family! This is what we all experience when we gather for fraternity – no matter the size of it – our local fraternity of only 7 members; our regional fraternity gatherings at workshops, chapters, Unity Day; the national fraternity chapters and retreats and workshops; and a gathering like the 650 people at the Quinquennial – where there was rep-

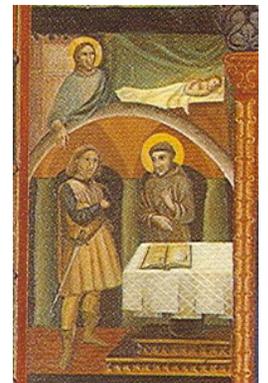
What We Have Promised to Live . . .

Witnessing to the good yet to come and obligated to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.

As the father sees in every person the features of this Son, the firstborn of many brothers and sister, so the Secular Franciscans with a

gentle and courteous spirit accept all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ.

A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ (**RULE**, Article 12–13).



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resentation from local, regional, national, and international fraternities. The people! The family!

Some of our members had experienced previous Qs. For others, this was their first. We urge each fraternity to start saving now for the next Q in 2020. Each fraternity could then send at least one representative, who will then bring back a wealth of information for the benefit of all.



Delegates from Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity sending happy smiles home from in front of the traditional "Q" quilt in St. Louis. Some delegates were not present for the photo . . . off having too much fraternal joy!



Linda Grady and Elaine Steiner (Lady Clare Fraternity) in front of the "Q" Banner



Jack Hill OFS
People of Peace Fraternity

A burst of JOY from our National Minister ends "Q" in St. Louis . . . what a sendoff!



The 19th Q concluded with a burst of Franciscan joy, as National Minister Jan Parker, OFS, left the audience cheering and laughing as she belted out a special rendition of Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" – except that her lyrics changed it to "We've Been Revived."

The outburst of song preceded the congress' concluding mass (Sunday evening, July 3), which left celebrant Christopher Panagoplos, TOR, wondering how he was supposed to follow that act. Nevertheless, the national spiritual assistant made a few quips himself that resulted in laughter rippling through the crowd.

"We had such joy these past few days," Father Chris noted in his homily. "When we gather, it bubbles forth. We took a journey with Dan (Horan) and now we're back to the beginning – penance." He said St. Francis had identified himself with Secular Franciscans – the original brothers and sisters of penance.

He noted that "prayer, poverty, humility, conversion" were the four values that Francis stood for, and that characterize Franciscan life today. In fact, the "charism of the order is conversion of life," he said, and asked: How does this ongoing conversion have expression today?

The answer is "to act justly," to have a "simple and uncluttered life," "to help the poor, the homeless, the abused, the unemployed, the neglected, homosexuals, refugees – the list goes on and on."

He added: "The pope tells us to get our feet dirty... Let us start walking in their shoes to feel what they experience."

In other words, responding to others' needs "means we are humble and attentive." After all, "in God's plan there is room for everyone."

Franciscan gems from Fr. Keith Warner, OFM

Fr. Keith Warner, OFM, stood at the podium and proclaimed: "'Laudato Si' is the most Franciscan papal encyclical ever!"

"Yeah!" the Quinquennial Congress audience murmured in reply.

Brother Keith raised his voice and repeated that statement. "Yeah!" the crowd exclaimed. Then the friar shouted: "'Laudato Si' is the most Franciscan papal encyclical EVER!" "YEAH!" the audience shouted back.

Thus began Brother Keith's featured presentation on an encyclical riddled with Franciscan gems.



"We are in a Franciscan moment in the church cited as an example of "integral ecology" – the relational and holistic connection of nature, God and humanity.

Brother Keith pointed to another connectedness – "the cry of the poor" and "the cry of the earth." Care for the poor and care for the earth are together, always. Pope Francis is engaging in a dialogue that one cannot protect the earth without protecting the poor, and vice versa.

St. Francis is cited as an example of "integral ecology" – the relational and holistic connection of nature, God and humanity.

A third item he pointed to was how the encyclical uses the Franciscan approach to ethics – that nature has dignity and value, and that "Laudato Si" helps shift the conversation to an ethics of care that sees the world in a loving relationship. It incorporates a sense of global consciousness and the common good.

Fr. Keith then offered suggestions for carrying out the ideas contained in "Laudato Si". These can be read on the NAFRA website with other summaries of talks given at the "Q".

Fr. Lester Bach: "You need to have an impact . . ."



When it comes to serving others – such as in a soup kitchen – "it's not so much what you do, but how you do it."

In other words, it's about building relationships, noted Capuchin Friar Lester Bach, a featured presenter on Day 2 of the Quinquennial Congress.

It starts with Secular Franciscan fraternities, with a spirituality steeped in the love of the Trinity, and a call to love one another. Indeed, he said, there should be a change in you when you are helping others."

"The more you can relate to the people you serve, the better."

Father Lester said he wasn't going to heap praise on Secular Franciscans, as other presenters had. Instead, he wanted to remind Seculars to recognize the need for conversion, and to prod fraternities to move beyond a devotional mindset to one of expressing God's love in action, in relationships.

"Fraternities should have some sort of impact."

Remember, he said, "the Franciscan vocation leaves no one out of your concern and compassion."



Dave Dieringer, OFS, deep in thought during a conference

Fr. Sergious, OFM, sharing his wisdom with the assembly



Joe Higginbotham, OFS, who presented his Franciscan Music materials and Sr. Agnes Marie, OSF, share a few moments between talks..

Why "Why do we pray so small when our God is so big?" Carolyn Townsend, OFS, asked.



Check NAFRA website for her answer.



The assembly shares their gratitude to the hotel staff for their warm hospitality and generous care.



“Let the good times begin . . .”

On Thursday, June 30, 2016, the delegates to the Quinquennial of the Secular Franciscan Order began arriving from all corners of the United States, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Yugoslavia, and several other nations around the world. The lobby of the Renaissance hotel began — and never stopped, reverberating with the happy voices, hugs, and smiles of the over 650 delegates in attendance who reflected on the theme of the “Q”, “Reviving Our Spirit”.

Actually, the joy started when my travel companion, Susie Solloway, OFS, from Holy Family Fraternity in Fort Wayne and I stopped for a sandwich at McDonald’s in a small Illinois town just inside the state line. As we were eating our lunch, a group of folks from Ohio came in — all sporting TAU crosses and the hugs, kisses, and “hello’s” began — and continued throughout the week as we met again and again.

Anyone present in St. Louis knows there wasn’t any lack of spirit as we listened to top notch presenters who enlivened our spirits with well thought-out meditations on the implementation of the Franciscan spirit as found in the Constitutions, Rule, and Sources of Franciscan life. It was heart-warming to think that, 800 years after the founding of our Franciscan family, we could rejoice together that Francis had remained faithful to his call even when others were demanding that he rescind his understanding of the Gospel life. “The Lord told me”, Francis said repeatedly. In St. Louis, we all rejoiced in the spirit of that same

call to renew ourselves in living out the astounding gift that Francis gave to the Church — the Gospel life: pure, plain, simple, uncomplicated.

Meal times, break outs, the Little Fraternities, encounters in the aisles with the vendors, as well as informal gatherings all gave witness to the unconquerable joy of all present. Even the hotel staff’s care and ministry to all of us was filled with joy and the spirit of service to all. We were all brothers and sisters and no one knew a stranger!

One could only leave with a heart filled with gratitude for having been called to the Franciscan Gospel life. For a few short days in St. Louis, we experienced what the psalmist has told us, “How wonderful it is where brethren dwell as one”. Hopefully we can all take that spirit of joy and unity back to our local fraternities and set the world on fire again and again ever more deeply with the spirit of our Holy Father St. Francis.



Windows at St. Francis Parish, Teutopolis IL (on the way to the Q in St. Louis)



Regional Minister Kathleen White was part of the panel who presented a break out session on “Social Media”

Reflections from our Brother Bill Schmitt, OFS:
"Quinquennial", spelled LOVE . . . in action!



I have a testimony from the recent Q that I wanted to share with you. It's a testimony of gratitude sprung from difficult circumstances. It's a rediscovery of Franciscan joy which really "shows what it's made of" during hard times. This testimony fits so well with the Q's theme of "Reviving the Spirit" that I could not refuse Sister Agnes Marie's good idea to contribute these words of thanks.

On the Sunday of the Q, when storms were looming outside and there were hints of blackouts, fire alarms, and elevator closures inside, I decided to walk downstairs from the twelfth floor lunch to the sixth floor. Suffice it to say that I had not selected a "stairway to heaven" because the process of entering the sixth floor hallway sent me crashing backwards to the concrete floor and fracturing my tailbone.

But you know what the Lord sent me? First, very kind-hearted people from the Q—people I didn't even know—and people from the hotel staff with genuinely compassionate responses to my yelps of pain. Then the Lord sent me my Mishawaka brother in Francis, Joe Higginbotham. He interrupted work at his Franciscan Music outpost downstairs and rushed upstairs to help me find comfort and to welcome paramedics. These St. Louis professionals were also extraordinarily kind and gave me peace of mind that I hadn't paralyzed myself or something like that.

After a few hours of trying to heal myself with bed rest, I sent out

another yelp, and Joe was there in an instant. Paramedics and an ambulance came, again so quick and professional—and understanding when I said I just wanted to go by cab to a local "urgent care center." I had neglected to figure out the details of locating such a center, calling a cab, and making all the maneuvers between hotel and cab and care center, plus the return trip. But again, the Lord sent all the right people and resources at all the right times.

Actually, it was folks like Joe who got me a wheelchair, a hotel staffer who summoned a cab, and Dave Dieringer, our long-time minister of mercy in the Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity, who appeared out of nowhere and said he was willing to accompany me on the journey to the care center. With Dave as moral support and sign of fraternal solidarity, we saw the urgent care professionals swing into action. Their diagnosis and pain prescription allowed me to get home to South Bend the next day, with Joe once again providing transportation and cheer and arranging his schedule around my needs.

I'm now healing apace, but the greatest healing from the Q has been a true revival of my spirit, a plunge into humiliated vulnerability that allowed me to be lifted up, literally and figuratively. The affirmations of fraternal charity and God's loving presence, even in people I didn't know and won't meet again, revived my appreciation for the Franciscan spirit—and the powerful presence of

the Holy Spirit—that I had felt among all our brothers and sisters from the first day of the Q.

With thanks to all my brothers and sisters in our own fraternity who showed concern, led in ongoing formation by Sister Agnes Marie, and with special thanks to good brothers Joe and Dave, I came away with certain concrete experiences (ooh, don't say concrete!). The Holy Eucharist lives among us, during and after the Liturgy, in thanksgiving and love and humble self-giving. This realization, which awed St. Francis, revived my spirit of Franciscan joy. I can only hope that my times of painful self-preoccupation and chaotic annoyance became occasions for others to feel that paradoxical gift of Franciscan joy themselves. I'll try to take my cue for repentance and renewal from their kindness and from our awesome Secular Franciscan Order. From now on, I'm going to spell these national meetings "c-u-e."



PSA Jerome Wolbert, OFM

Impressions from the "Q"



Was there one particular event that you wish everyone at home could have experienced with you?

This was my first experience attending the "Q." I hope it would not be my last. As a newly professed Franciscan Secular (April 16, 2016), I had an open mind about attending. I immediately felt the brotherly and sisterly affection among everyone. Even though the registration was a little difficult, I felt everyone was being patient, and held onto their Franciscan obedience values.

During the entire conference, I truly felt the warmth, smiles, friendliness from all the Seculars present. Perhaps because we are all on the same journey; however, we were from all over the United States and beyond. Remarkable.

I'd like to compliment the committee who planned the conference. It all flowed so well (daily challenge making everyone happy when you have over 600 people to deal with) and all the work in planning was simply commendable. I have top honors to the Key Speaker, Father Dan Horan. I loved meeting after his talks with our Little Fraternities. I was in a GREAT group of people (Table 43 & 50). The lady who did this arrangement should receive a bouquet of roses. Fantastic job. What a perfect way to meet new people. Our group actually bonded in so many respects. I think also being Franciscan Seculars held that bond closer together, for we understood one another.

I felt uplifted and spiritually refreshed when I left Monday morning. I loved learning the Franciscan Family Chaplet (didn't know there was one) and The Office of the Passion of Saint Francis of Assisi. I spoke with my fraternity sisters and we all felt we had a lot to bring back to our home fraternity.

Alysson Braatz, Our Lady of Lourdes Fraternity, Cedar Lake

YES! For me being the first time going to the Q, I found it to be a family reunion! I sat with someone different almost every chance, every day and felt like I was sitting next to someone I was related to! I loved meeting my brothers and sister! I would say sharing mass and prayer time was my favorite. The feeling of having so many like minded spiritual people together praising God is one of the most beautiful feelings in the world! The fact that everyone I came into contact with was joyous and had a great sense of humor just added to the experience!

One of the days waiting for the elevator on an upper floor I could hear people as it came closer and I could not help but think there was a group of college students having a great time in the elevator. When it opened it was all my brothers and sisters crammed in the elevator smiling and laughing. It looked full but was told "no we have room" and was pulled in for a ride with the joyous group!

Lisa Cook, OFS, Little Portion Fraternity, Valparaiso



John and Marie Szczepanski, Little Portion Fraternity, Valparaiso

The most memorable talk from the Q was by Fr Murray Bodo OFM given on the first evening.

He is so honest and genuine in his writing and in his sharing.

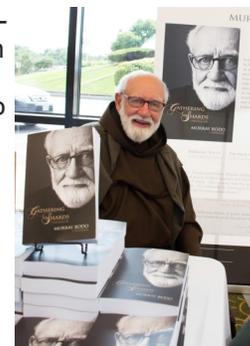
He showed great courage in allowing us to get a glimpse of how broken he was when asked to write his now famous book "Francis, The Journey and the Dream".

As a poet I think he has a greater understanding of Francis the poet and he conveys this understanding to his audience.

His books are all inspiring and full of spiritual insight into the Franciscan journey to live out the Gospel in the world today.

Pace e bene

Susan Solloway, OFS, Holy Family Fraternity, Fort Wayne



Our Lady of Indiana Regional Fraternity



To join OUR LADY OF INDIANA list-serve send a blank email to:

OLI-Region-subscribe@yahogroups.com

Regional news, announcements, etc.



Your growing Regional Newsletter Staff:

Mary Andrews, OFS

John Cheeseman, OFS

Mary Mitchell, OFS

Sr. Agnes Marie, OSF

Dates to Remember

September 10, 2016: Fall Formation Workshop: Open to Local Formation Teams

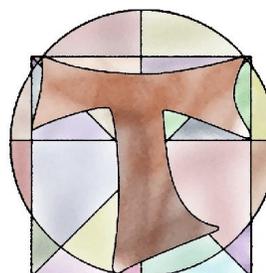
October 3 - 4, 2016: Transitus and Feast of our Holy Father St. Francis.

October 8, 2016: Regional Executive Council

November 1—6, 2016: NaFra Chapter—Orlando, FL: Regional Minister attends

November 12, 2016: Fall Chapter of Mats: all local Ministers or their Delegate required to attend

November 20, 2016: The "Jubilee Year of Mercy" ends with today's Solemnity of Christ the King.



A Message from our Holy Father, Pope Francis



Holy Father's Visit to St. Mary of the Angels on August 2, 2016

Today, dear brothers and sisters, I would like before all else to recall the words that, according to an ancient tradition, Saint Francis spoke in this very place, in the presence of all the townsfolk and bishops: "*I want to send you all to heaven!*" What finer thing could the Poor Man of Assisi ask for, if not the gift of salvation, eternal life and unending joy, that Jesus won for us by his death and resurrection?

Besides, what is heaven if not the mystery of love that eternally unites us to God, to contemplate him forever? The Church has always professed this by expressing her belief in the *communion of saints*. We are never alone in living the faith; we do so in the company of all the saints and holy ones, including our loved ones who practiced the faith with joyful simplicity and bore witness to it by their lives. There is a bond, unseen but not for that reason any less real, which makes us, by baptism, "one body" moved by "one Spirit" (cf. *Eph 4:4*). When Saint Francis asked Pope Honorius III to grant an indulgence to all who visited the *Porziuncola*, he was perhaps thinking of Jesus' words to the disciples: "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (*Jn 14:2-3*).